

REMARKS

Claims 1, 6-7, 9, 14-15, 17, 22-23, and 25-30 were pending. Claims 6-7, 14-15, 22-23, and 27-29 have been cancelled. The Abstract has been amended to be a concise statement of the invention as recited in the claims. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 1, 9, 17, 26, and 30 remain pending in the application. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the amendments to the claims and the remarks.

I. Specification

The Abstract was objected to as being a copy of the Summary. Applicant has amended the Abstract to be a concise statement of the invention as recited in the claims. No new matter has been added. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the objections to the Abstract.

II. The § 112 Rejections

Claims 25, 27, and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. Specifically the Examiner asserts that there is insufficient antecedent basis for the limitation “controlling locking scheme”. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Support for such a limitation can be found in the specification at page 1, lines 14-19 which describes that an application can use a timestamp column for controlling an optimistic locking scheme. Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests withdrawal of the § 112 rejections with respect to claims 25, 27, and 29.

Claims 9 and 14-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter not described in the specification – namely, the claims recite “computer readable medium”. Claims 9 and 14-15 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

Claims 9 and 14-15 have been cancelled rendering these rejections moot.

III. The § 101 Rejections

Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101, as not being directed to statutory subject matter.

Claim 17 has been cancelled rendering this rejection moot.

IV. The § 103 Rejections

Claims 6-7, 14-15, 22-23, and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,721,915 (“Sockut”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,882,994 (“Yoshimura”).

Claims 6-7, 14-15, 22-23, and 28 have been cancelled rendering these rejections moot.

Claims 1, 9, 17, 26, and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoshimura, in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,999,977 (“Norcott”) and U.S. Patent No. 5,812,840 (“Shwartz”).

Claims 25 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoshimura, in view of Norcott, Shwartz, and Admitted Prior Art (APA).

Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

Claim 25 recites a method for providing a timestamp for data in a database system, in which the database system operates in accordance with a database schema. The method includes providing a hidden timestamp column in a table in the database system. The hidden timestamp column includes a timestamp value for each row of data in the table, and the timestamp value indicates a last time a corresponding row of data in the table was previously modified. The hidden timestamp column does not appear in the database schema by default and exposes the timestamp value for a given row of data in the table only to a query that calls the timestamp column by name.

A. Yoshimura Fails To Disclose Providing A Hidden Timestamp Column That Does Not Appear In A Database Schema By Default And Exposes A Timestamp Value For A Given Row Of Data In A Table Only To A Query That Calls The Timestamp Column By Name

Yoshimura discloses a database querying method in which a first data item is obtained from a database table in response to a query request, and a second data item (e.g., a timestamp) is obtained by referencing a log file. The first and second data items are integrated and returned as an integration result to the query request (see Abstract; col. 2, ll. 13-23). The Examiner recognizes that Yoshimura fails to disclose providing a hidden timestamp column. Consequently, Yoshimura cannot disclose a hidden timestamp column that exposes a timestamp value (for a given row of data in a table) only to a query that calls the timestamp column by name.

B. Shwartz and Norcott Each Fails To Disclose Providing A Hidden Timestamp Column That Does Not Appear In A Database Schema By Default And Exposes A Timestamp Value For A Given Row Of Data In A Table Only To A Query That Calls The Timestamp Column By Name

Shwartz discloses a database querying tool that guides a user in creating syntactically and semantically correct SQL queries (see Abstract). In one aspect, Shwartz discloses hiding columns that are important in relating database tables (of a database) but that are not used by an end user who will be forming queries on the database (col. 13, ll. 25-28). That is, Shwartz teaches using hidden columns to hide the columns so that a user cannot attempt to display them or to use them in formulating a query (col. 13, ll. 33-36). Shwartz further discloses that such a

technique of hiding columns is useful in preventing end users from displaying private or protected data (col. 13, ll. 37-41).

Thus, even assuming Norcott discloses providing a timestamp column in a database (which Applicant does not concede), Shwartz fails to disclose a hidden column that exposes a timestamp value (for a given row of data in a table) – or any data value – only to a query that calls the hidden column by name. Rather, as discussed above, the hidden columns of Shwartz simply do not expose any data values to queries. Consequently, the hidden columns of Shwartz cannot read on the hidden timestamp column as recited in claim 25.

C. The claim has limitations not taught by either reference

To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974).

Yoshimura, Norcott, and Shwartz (either alone or in combination) fail to disclose providing a hidden timestamp column that does not appear in a database schema by default and exposes a timestamp value for a given row of data in a table only to a query that calls the timestamp column by name. Consequently, the combination of Yoshimura, Norcott, and Shwartz cannot render claim 25 obvious.

For at least these reasons, Applicant submits that claim 25 is in condition for allowance.

D. Other Independent Claims

Claim 29 incorporates limitations similar to those of claim 25. Claim 29 is also allowable over Yoshimura, Norcott, and Shwartz for reasons corresponding to those set forth with respect to claim 25.

Should any unresolved issues remain or should the claims need further clarifying amendments to expedite allowance of the pending application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,
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